



MIKE KRAUSE  
Executive Director

STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION**  
PARKWAY TOWERS, SUITE 1900  
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0830  
(615) 741-3605  
FAX: (615) 741-6230

BILL HASLAM  
Governor

TO: President M. David Rudd  
University of Memphis

FROM: Mike Krause *MK*

SUBJECT: University of Memphis  
Letter of Notification: Nursing PhD Program

DATE: May 1, 2017

In accordance with THEC policies, colleges and universities are required to submit Letters of Notification for authorization to proceed with developing proposals for new academic programs. The THEC Financial Projection Form for the proposed program must accompany the letter of notification to plan. Upon THEC approval to proceed with developing proposals, institutions should do so in a manner consistent with THEC policies and criteria.

Proposed programs must document relevance to institution's mission, provide enrollment, graduation and financial projections, document employer and student demand, describe the anticipated evaluation process, and certify that the proposed program will not unnecessarily duplicate existing offerings at other Tennessee public institutions. The proposal must ensure faculty sufficiency, existence of student support resources, and adequacy of library, space, equipment, and technology.

I approve the University of Memphis' Letter of Notification (LON) to plan the Nursing PhD program. It is understood that the proposed program will be in accordance with the institutional mission and will meet *Tennessee Public Agenda for Higher Education 2015-2025* degree completion and workforce development objectives.

The LON projects implementation of an approved Nursing PhD program in August 2017. Due to the time required to complete the approval process, an amended implementation date will be required. Please be advised that the approval and the attached LON evaluation will be posted on the THEC website for public disclosure.

cc: Dr. Karen Weddle West  
Dr. Jasbir Dhaliwal  
Betty Dandridge Johnson

# Tennessee Higher Education Commission

## Letter of Notification Evaluation

May 1, 2017



The evaluation of the Letter of Notification is in accordance with the *THEC Policy A1.0 New Academic Programs: Approval Process*. The evaluation is conducted by interested parties and THEC staff. The LON is posted on the THEC website for a 15 day period of comment by interested parties. Based on the internal and external evaluation, THEC will make a determination of the LON to support, not to support, or defer a decision based on a revised LON.

<b>Institution:</b> University of Memphis	<b>LON Submission Date:</b> March 20, 2017
<b>Academic Program, Degree Designation:</b> Nursing, PhD	
<b>Proposed CIP Code:</b> 51.3808 (Nursing Science) <i>Recommend Change to 51.3817 (Nursing Education)</i>	
<b>Proposed Implementation Date:</b> August 2017 <i>Due to the time required to complete the program proposal and conduct the external review, an amended implementation date will be required.</i>	
<b>Time Period Posted on Website for Public Comment:</b> April 12-25, 2017	

Criteria	Comments
<b>Letter of Support from President/Chancellor</b>	Letter of Support from President Rudd indicating that University of Memphis BOT approved the proposal on March 17, 2017.
<b>Overall Comments</b>	Based on the program outcomes (see program purpose below), THEC recommends CIP code of 51.3817 (Nursing Education) for the proposed Nursing PhD program.
<b>Purpose and Nature of Program</b>	Designed for those who plan to teach, generate nursing and interdisciplinary research using rigorous methods to transform understandings and new knowledge focused on reducing health disparities, increasing the years of quality life, providing leadership to improve the safety and quality of health care systems, and educating future nurses
<b>Alignment with State Master Plan and Institutional Mission</b>	Preparing PhD graduates contributes to nursing workforce development, improved health and thus economic development. Healthcare calls for evidence based nursing practice and precision medicine for improvement of safety and quality of patient care/service. Nursing needs continuous knowledge development that helps guide nursing practice. To this end, PhD graduates are important nursing workforce development for nurse researchers/scientists to generate new knowledge and nurse academicians to educate future nurses.
<b>Feasibility Study</b>	
<b>Student Interest</b>	The 120 research-focused doctoral programs in the US turned away 1,044 qualified applicants in 2008-2009 (AACN, 2010a). Since 2003, US enrollments in PhD programs have increased by 1/3 (1,000 students). The largest single enrollment increase (5.1%) in four years occurred in 2009. The increase reflects market demands for nurse educators with research background to generate new knowledge that guides nursing practice.

	<i>The final proposal should reflect the most recent AACN's report on <u>2014-15 Enrollment and Graduations in Baccalaureate and Graduate Programs in Nursing</u>.</i>
<b>Local and regional need</b>	<p>Increasing RN graduates is significantly stymied by a serious faculty shortage. In 2009, 39% of ASN programs and 23% of BSN programs turned away qualified applicants because of the lack of faculty, resources, and clinical sites (National League for Nursing, 2010). The US has only 28,369 nursing faculty (DHHS, 2010) to meet the needs of more than 600 baccalaureates, 270 masters, 120 practice doctoral, and 120 research doctoral programs in the US (AACN, 2010a). The AACN (2010b) survey respondents cited the limited pool of doctorally prepared faculty (30.4%) as the primary reason for faculty vacancies followed closely by noncompetitive salaries (30.2%). Without qualified faculty, nurses cannot be trained.</p> <p>No Tennessee specific data is provided.</p>
<b>Employer need/demand</b>	While the number of graduates has doubled over three years, graduating only 21 new PhDs per year is troubling for Tennessee. In that same year, the state had 785 full-time faculty, 23 budgeted unfilled positions, and 10 retirements. (Tennessee Center for Nursing, 2010a). Having only 21 possible new faculty to fill 33 positions does not begin to allow Tennessee to increase its production of new RNs by 40 percent to forestall a significant nursing shortage in 2020.
<b>Future sustainable need/demand</b>	Letters of support from Baptist Memorial Health Care Corporation and Methodist Le Bonheur Healthcare indicated need for degree program and institutional capacity to deliver the program.
<b>Supporting Documentation of Costs Met through Internal Reallocation or Other Sources</b>	The PhD Program will be sustained by generating revenues from student tuitions and fees, and by seeking research grants to support faculty and PhD students' research activities.
<b>THEC Financial Projection Form</b>	<p>The THEC Financial Projection form reflects a balanced budget for the 7-year period. <i>Special attention should be focused on the salary and tuition/fees for the sole graduate assistantship. Do these projections reflect only one semester (with no projected increase during the 7-year period)? If not, a \$6K graduate assistantship is extremely low.</i></p> <p><i>Additional information is needed for faculty salaries -- does this represent new faculty as well as adjunct faculty?</i></p>
<b>No Unnecessary Duplication</b>	There are four PhD programs in Tennessee that collectively graduate 7-21 new PhDs per year. These PhD programs are classified with the 51.3808 CIP Code. <i>No Nursing Education PhD program exists within the state with the recommended CIP Code of 51.3817.</i>

### Public Comment

The Letter of Notification for the proposed Nursing PhD program was posted on the THEC website for a 15 day period from April 12-25, 2017. The following comments were provided by one individual:

- There are a limited number of Nursing PhD programs in Tennessee. As far as I know, the degree is offered in ETSU, UTK, and Vanderbilt. Having a Nursing PhD program in the Memphis area may be a geographic advantage for the state in general and for the region in particular.
- As a research degree, the Nursing PhD is different in focus with a clinical degree such as the DNP.
- The Nursing PhD is not governed by the recommendations by Tripp Umbach to THEC regarding the DNP.

### Public Comments